

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL****HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2021****THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5  
CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG****Members Present:**

Mayor John Biggs*	Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Rabina Khan*
Councillor Kabir Ahmed*	Councillor Tarik Khan*
Councillor Rajib Ahmed*	Councillor James King
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Harun Miah*
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Asma Begum	Councillor Victoria Obaze*
Councillor Rachel Blake*	Councillor Kyrsten Perry*
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Leema Qureshi
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin*	Councillor Zenith Rahman*
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury*	Councillor Candida Ronald*
Councillor Shad Chowdhury*	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan*
Councillor Dipa Das	Councillor Dan Tomlinson*
Councillor David Edgar*	Councillor Helal Uddin*
Councillor Marc Francis	Councillor Abdal Ullah
Councillor Peter Golds*	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman*
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Councillor Val Whitehead*
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain*	Councillor Andrew Wood*
Councillor Asma Islam*	
Councillor Sirajul Islam*	

\*Councillors present in person in the Council Chamber and can vote.  
(Remaining Councillors attended from remote locations).

**The Speaker of the Council, Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain in  
the Chair**

The Speaker of the Council provided his update to the Council. He advised that he was pleased to have been able to carry out his role more fully over the previous couple of months. The highlights included:

- Hosting the Freedom of the Borough Award ceremony at the Tower of London in October, to award five outstanding individuals the title and celebrate their achievements.
- The Annual Civic Service in Westminster Abbey.

- Several Council organised events across the borough to mark the pandemic – to remember those affected and recognise the efforts of local people throughout this difficult time.
- A special presentation and tree planting event in Hyde Park with civic representatives to mark Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, as part of The Queen’s Green Canopy.
- Celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Independence of Bangladesh, including displays of art, film and cultural performances.
- Community events bringing people together - such as the 50 Active UK football match and the curry awards.
- An Event to mark the Battle of Cable Street.
- Remembrance events including ceremonies at the Town Hall and a service at the War Memorial, Tower Hill on Remembrance Sunday
- A Dementia awareness event, where he had also had the honour of becoming a dementia friend and learnt more about this illness which affects so many people.

Turning to some very sad news, he reported that the Council were all shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Sir David Amess MP in such wicked and horrific circumstances. Sir David dedicated nearly 40 years to public service and to serving his constituents in Basildon and Southend. He will be greatly missed. The Speaker stated that the Council all stood united in expressing its utter outrage at acts of violence, hostility or aggression against democratically elected representatives. The Council’s thoughts and prayers are with his family at this very difficult time.

The Council observed a minutes silence to remember everyone that had been affected by this and had lost their lives or had been harmed whilst serving in public office.

Regarding a request to move an urgent motion on the St Georges Pool, the Speaker advised that he had considered this request with the Monitoring Officer. Having taken advice, he did not consider that this matter was urgent enough to be accepted for this meeting. Members may present this matter at the next meeting in January 2022 should they wish.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Sufia Alam (maternity leave)
- Councillor Eve McQuillan
- Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
- Councillor Mohammed Pappu

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS**

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 11.15, Member Question regarding the management of

Children's Care Homes. This was on the basis of her employment by Young Futures Children In Care who provide residential support for young people in care. (This question was not asked).

The following Councillors declared a Non - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 9.1, Report of Cabinet on the Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy 2021-24:

- Councillor Kabir Ahmed – on the grounds on his employment in a shop in Brick Lane.
- Councillor Denise Jones – on the grounds of owning a business in Brick Lane.
- Councillor Victoria Obaze – as an Ambassador for the London Tea Exchange located in Brick Lane.

### **3. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and the Meeting of the Freedom of the Borough Council meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

### **4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive provided his regular update regarding the following issues:

- Covid - 19 and Vaccines. Whilst case numbers had increased slightly, the Borough were still in the lower half at present in London for infections. 220,000, had received their first vaccine. 195,000 had received both doses. Progress continued to be made with the programme of vaccinations in schools, (as well as the booster, flu and evergreen vaccinations), and the community based supplementary vaccine for 12-15 year olds.
- Recent Inspections – following the receipt of the formal SEND inspection report by OFSTED, an action plan will be taken forward.
- Staffing update. He was pleased to welcome to the Council the following new senior officers:
  - Katie O'Driscoll – as the Director of Adult Social Care,
  - Suzannah Beasley – Murray – Director of Supporting Families,
  - Musrat Zaman - Director of Workforce, OD and Business support.
- Success at Awards. Congratulation were due to James Thomas, on winning a Silver Award at the national social worker of the year awards. He also gave a special mention to the following teams on receiving prestigious awards. These were:

- The support teams in Providence Row Housing Association, for winning a national Housing Heroes Awards for their work during the pandemic
- Health Watch Tower Hamlets on winning a national award in relation to their work on experiences of care.
- He also once again congratulated the five winners of the Freedom of the Borough Award.
- Turning to an emergency matter, it was reported that the Council will continue to liaise with Clarion concerning the wellbeing of residents at Clare House.

## 5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

### 5.1 Petition regarding Stop Wellington Row, Barnet Grove & Quilter Street Road Closures & Restrictions

Petition not presented due to the absence of the Petitioner.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

### 5.2 Petition regarding Save St Andrew's Wharf Youth Club

Camila Consolmagno addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

The Council had no intention of changing the youth club to a football club. Instead, the centre will be kept open, under a new delivery model.

The successful bidder had undergone a rigorous and thorough process with the aim of delivering the following priorities, (as set out in the contract requirements):

- A range of free and assessable, high-quality, well publicised activities.
- A balance between centre based and detached provision, with sessions run by qualified, paid staff.

Sporting Foundation has a long track record of working with young people in Tower Hamlets.

Councillor Begum also highlighted her intentions to meet with the Petitioners and Officers next week to consider further their concerns.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Children and Culture for a written response within 28 days.

**5.3 Petition regarding Tower Hamlets Council proposing to change the conditions of succession for tenants**

Terry McGreenera addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

The Council had undertaken extensive consultation with tenants on changes to the policy, including the proposal to remove second successions. He felt that it was right to keep the policy on successions updated to reflect good practice and changes in the law in the housing sector.

The Council were currently exploring a number of improvements. A post consultation report will be prepared and any proposals will be decided by the Mayor in Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Place for a written response within 28 days.

**5.4 Petition regarding Keep our Warden Service on Ocean Estate**

Brenda Daley and Margie Watts addressed the meeting on behalf of the petitioners, and responded to questions from Members. Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, then responded to the matters raised in the petition.

She reported that she had meet with the residents to discuss the issues, including the difficulties in funding the current arrangements and the availability of other projects in the area that could support residents that used the club. She hoped that these options could continue to be explored. She also expressed an intention to meet with the residents again to discuss these issues.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the petition be referred to the Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community for a written response within 28 days.

**Procedural Motion.**

Under Council Procedure Rule, 14.13, Councillor Peter Golds **moved** and Councillor Andrew Wood **seconded** a proposal that Motion 12.2 regarding

Probity in Planning be considered as the next Item of business. This was put to the vote and was **defeated**.

## 6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented his report to the Council.

The Opposition Group Leader's then responded briefly to the Mayor's report.

- Councillor Peter Golds, Leader of the Conservative Group.
- Councillor Kabir Ahmed, Leader of the Aspire Group.

The Mayor provided concluding remarks.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION MOTION DEBATE - REGARDING COP26

Councillor Asma Islam **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Rabina Khan **moved** and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded** an amendment to the motion (as set out in the supplementary agenda).

### Adjournment

The Speaker of the Council adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes to allow Members to read the amendments to motions circulated and published in the supplementary agenda

Following the adjournment, Councillor Rabina Khan agreed to accept an amendment from Councillor Asma Islam as set out below.

To replace point 3 of the amendment (Under this Council Resolves)

- That the Council must proactively work to ensure that people ALWAYS have access to recycling bags particularly those who are elderly or cannot easily pick bags up from distribution points.

With

- The Council carry on exploring bringing in reusable recycling bags, which will eventually replace plastic recycling bags.

The updated text of this amendment is set out below:

The Council Notes:

1. According to figures published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Tower Hamlets is the third-worst borough for recycling in London.

2. Defra figures also show that Tower Hamlets was the fourth-worst local authority for recycling in the whole of the UK in 2019/20.
3. A report published by the Council showed that the recycling rate per household was just 19.5 percent between April and June this year - significantly lower than the UK average of 46.2 percent.
4. Regularly misses recycling and refuse collections potentially disenfranchises residents from recycling.
5. Our borough's household refuse and recycling must be collected on time and our streets cleaned regularly. Residents need to see that the Council is leading the way to make our borough both clean and green.

The Council Resolves:

1. That a targeted approach by the Council to ensure that the Borough is no longer the fourth worst local authority for recycling.
2. That a concerted effort is made by the Council to ensure that recycling is collected on time without ANY missed collections.
3. The Council carry on exploring bringing in reusable recycling bags, which will eventually replace plastic recycling bags.

Councillor Asma Islam accepted this amendment.

The substantive motion, as amended, was put to a vote and was unanimously **agreed**.

**RESOLVED:**

This Council notes that:

1. The UK Government was the host of COP26, held in Scotland in November 2021. This was an opportunity for the UK Government to radically shape global action on climate change, and to use the opportunity to shape how climate change is tackled in the UK.
2. In March 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency setting an ambitious target of becoming a Net Zero Carbon Council by 2025.
3. In March 2020, the Council hosted the Climate Engagement event, and it then on behalf of the PEG set up the Climate Task Force representing key stakeholders and partners as identified by the PEG.
4. The Council has just launched the Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Partnership Action Plan.
5. The Council has already taken a number of actions locally to combat climate change, including:
  - a. Sustainable Workplace programme to encourage sustainable behaviours for council employees including: promoting resource efficiency, reduction in single use plastics and elimination of plastic cups from buildings, introduction of food waste collection to council offices to reduce waste being sent to landfill and incineration.
  - b. Adopted Local Plan policies that require all new development to achieve net zero carbon status.
  - c. Review of council Assets for Zero Carbon retrofit feasibility.

- Proposals include transitioning to low carbon heating and hot water systems and LED lighting, these projects will reduce carbon emissions by 105 tonnes a year.
- d. Completed initial feasibility for decarbonisation of Barkantine Heat and Power district heating network.
  - e. Promoting Trees for Streets
  - f. Council purchasing 100% renewable energy
  - g. Retrofitting schools projects
  - h. Solar Together London
  - i. Sustained investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
  - j. Sustained investment in public transport to support a just transition
6. Tower Hamlets has been named the most eco-friendly local authority in England in a study published by In Your Area, which found that the borough has the lowest carbon emissions in the country and it is the best in the UK for energy-efficient homes.
  7. According to figures published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Tower Hamlets is the third-worst borough for recycling in London.
  8. Defra figures also show that Tower Hamlets was the fourth-worst local authority for recycling in the whole of the UK in 2019/20.
  9. A report published by the Council showed that the recycling rate per household was just 19.5 percent between April and June this year - significantly lower than the UK average of 46.2 percent.
  10. Regularly misses recycling and refuse collections potentially disenfranchises residents from recycling.
  11. Our borough's household refuse and recycling must be collected on time and our streets cleaned regularly. Residents need to see that the Council is leading the way to make our borough both clean and green.

This Council believes:

1. This summer has seen more evidence of the immediate impact of climate change across the world, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Report, published in August 2021, found that the global surface temperature will continue to rise until at least the middle of this century. This shows the need for more ambitious and immediate action to tackle this climate emergency at a local, national and international level.
2. The Council has made significant progress but must continue to press its partners and the UK Government for a wider solution while leading by example.

This Council resolves to:

1. Ask the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning to raise this motion with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to:
  - a. Call for the UK Government to provide local authorities with the necessary resources to take further action against climate

change, and to support a fair and just transition to a Net Zero Carbon UK.

- b. State our support for more public investment in green projects across the UK to tackle the Climate Emergency.
2. Continue to work with local residents, businesses and council partners to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint in order to achieve our net zero commitment.
3. That a targeted approach by the Council to ensure that the Borough is no longer the fourth worst local authority for recycling.
4. That a concerted effort is made by the Council to ensure that recycling is collected on time without ANY missed collections.
5. The Council carry on exploring bringing in reusable recycling bags, which will eventually replace the plastic recycling bags.

## 8. **OPPOSITION MOTION DEBATE - KNIFE CRIME EMERGENCY IN TOWER HAMLETS**

Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded** the motion as printed in the agenda.

Councillor Sirajul Islam **moved** and Mayor John Biggs **seconded** the following amendment to the motion as set out in the supplementary agenda:

Added text is underlined.

Deleted text is scored out.

This council notes:

1. That tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a police responsibility, however local councils have an important role to play in supporting the police to do this.
2. That a petition entitled “Knife Crime Emergency in Tower Hamlets” on Change.org has been signed by 23,310 people, and the council fully recognises the concerns that are regularly raised about crime and is working hard to address them, alongside the police and other partners. ~~The petition has been organised by Isle of Dogs residents and former Canary Wharf Cllr Maium Talukdar.~~
3. That knife crime ~~in Tower Hamlets~~ is a serious issue across the whole country and leads to fatalities and serious injury, especially among young people.
4. That knife crime ~~in Tower Hamlets~~ creates a perception of a lack of safety among residents that the streets of this Borough are not safe, and that elected representatives have a public duty not to sensationalise these serious issues, but instead must engage in careful debate that does not cause fear.

5. That Tower Hamlets Council funds additional police officers in order to fill the gaps in policing caused by Tory Government cuts. Between April and June this year, Tower Hamlets saw 4,664 hours of uniformed and plain clothes patrols conducted by council-funded police officers

This council believes:

6. The reduction in police budgets and closure of local police stations, such as the police station in Manchester Road is a direct result of the Tory Government's austerity agenda and risks harming efforts to deal with this emergency.
7. A great deal of knife crime is related to the sale of drugs and gangs and the council's partnership work with the police through Operation Continuum (including utilising council-funded police officers) is making significant steps in disrupting this crime.
8. An effective strategy to tackle knife crime must combine enforcement, education and support for those who may be tempted into carrying or using knives and redirecting them to positive activities.

This council resolves:

9. ~~To declare a~~ continue its work to tackle Knife Crime Emergency in Tower Hamlets, including through the violence, vulnerability, and exploitation (VVE) and to devise a strategy to tackle it launched earlier this year, and the Community Safety Partnership Plan that came to Full Council in March, among the other measures the council takes.
10. ~~That this strategy should be a practical document, assembled as an emergency — and not a bureaucratic paper exercise. It should be brought before the next Council meeting for discussion.~~
11. ~~That the Strategy should~~ To continue its work, including include the following elements.
  - ~~The Mayor should ask the borough's MPs and all LBTH councillors to work with him on making representations to~~ Continue to lobby the Government asking for the Council and the police to receive emergency funding to restore the funding lost through the last ten years of austerity, which would help to tackle knife crime in Tower Hamlets.
  - The Tower Hamlets Mayor should make representations to the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, asking him to continue his lobbying of the Government for additional ~~find~~ funding for the Council and police to tackle the Knife Crime Emergency in the borough, including the re-opening of Manchester Road police station. as Government-imposed funding cuts have forced the closure of police stations right across the country.
  - ~~To increase the provision of THEOs and extra police officers so that there is~~ which provide a constant and visible presence to deter crime as well as respond to it quickly.
  - ~~A strategy~~ Its work to disrupt the attraction in the borough towards carrying knives and other weapons, using a mixture of

- enforcement, education and support for those who may be or have been drawn towards knife crime in the borough.
- e. Whilst noting that any ~~The~~ knife deterrence strategy in the borough ~~should be organised under a clear and measurable cannot rely on just a slogan or rhetoric alone.~~
  - f. ~~A strategy to bring a~~ Our comprehensive, effective Youth Service in Tower Hamlets ~~back up to a level which can~~ which offers support to all those who need it, especially those at risk of being groomed into carrying knives and offending; this service to be based very locally ~~(rather than being restricted to “hubs”)~~ and offering a companion outreach service. Through hubs and detached youth work.
  - g. ~~A strategy~~ Continuing to offer specialist support for victims of knife crime and their families, with appropriate services for young women and for members of the BAME communities.
  - h. Continuing our work ~~A strategy~~ to tackle organised crime and disorder ~~by re-investing in a “Gangbuster Unit” that has~~ through Operation Continuum, a multi agency approach and intelligence led approach to tackle knife crime.

Under Council Procedure Rule 13.2, Councillor Kabir Ahmed **moved** and Councillor Harun Miah **seconded** a motion to withdraw their motion. This proposal was put a vote and was **defeated**.

The amendment was put to a vote and was **agreed**

The motion as amended was put to a vote and was **agreed**.

### **RESOLVED:**

This council notes:

1. That tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is a police responsibility, however local councils have an important role to play in supporting the police to do this.
2. That a petition entitled “Knife Crime Emergency in Tower Hamlets” on Change.org has been signed by 23,310 people, and the council fully recognises the concerns that are regularly raised about crime and is working hard to address them, alongside the police and other partners.
3. That knife crime is a serious issue across the whole country and leads to fatalities and serious injury, especially among young people.
4. That knife crime creates a perception of a lack of security among residents and that elected representatives have a public duty not to sensationalise these serious issues, but instead must engage in careful debate that does not cause fear.
5. That Tower Hamlets Council funds additional police officers in order to fill the gaps in policing caused by Tory Government cuts. Between April and June this year, Tower Hamlets saw 4,664 hours of uniformed and plain clothes patrols conducted by council-funded police officers

This council believes:

6. The reduction in police budgets and closure of local police stations, such as the police station in Manchester Road is a direct result of the Tory Government's austerity agenda and risks harming efforts to deal with this emergency.
7. A great deal of knife crime is related to the sale of drugs and gangs and the council's partnership work with the police through Operation Continuum (including utilising council-funded police officers) is making significant steps in disrupting this crime.
8. An effective strategy to tackle knife crime must combine enforcement, education and support for those who may be tempted into carrying or using knives and redirecting them to positive activities.

This council resolves:

9. To continue its work to tackle Knife Crime in Tower Hamlets, including through the violence, vulnerability, and exploitation (VVE) strategy launched earlier this year, and the Community Safety Partnership Plan that came to Full Council in March, among the other measures the council takes.
10. To continue its work, including the following elements.
  - a. Continue to lobby the Government asking for the Council and the police to receive emergency funding to restore the funding lost through the last ten years of austerity, which would help to tackle knife crime in Tower Hamlets.
  - b. The Tower Hamlets Mayor should make representations to the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, asking him to continue his lobbying of the Government for additional funding for the Council and police to tackle Knife Crime in the borough, as Government imposed funding cuts have forced the closure of police stations right across the country.
  - c. TEOs and extra police officers which provide a constant and visible presence to deter crime as well as respond to it quickly.
  - d. Its work to disrupt the attraction in the borough towards carrying knives and other weapons, using a mixture of enforcement, education and support for those who may be or have been drawn towards knife crime in the borough.
  - e. Whilst noting that any knife deterrence strategy in the borough cannot rely on just a slogan or rhetoric alone.
  - f. Our comprehensive, effective Youth Service in Tower Hamlets which offers support to all those who need it, especially those at risk of being groomed into carrying knives and offending; this service to be based very locally Through hubs and detached youth work.
  - g. Continuing to offer specialist support for victims of knife crime and their families, with appropriate services for young women and for members of the BAME communities.

- h. Continuing our work to tackle organised crime and disorder through Operation Continuum, a multi agency approach and intelligence led approach to tackle knife crime.

Councillor Kabir Ahmed voted against the motion as amended. (This was requested in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.7)

## **9. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

### **9.1 Report of Cabinet, Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy 2021-24**

The Council considered the report of Cabinet setting out the Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy 2021-24 under the Budget and Policy Framework.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. Note the evidence and statutory consultation returns and retain both CIAs in Brick Lane and Bethnal Green.
2. Agree the reviewed CIA Policy Statement, which has been reviewed in light of the consultation. The Policy Statement can be found in Appendix One to the main report, however Council should note paragraph 9.10 of the policy which states:  
  
"If there are no representations, the licensing authority must grant the application in terms that are consistent with the operating schedule submitted in line with their delegated authority."  
  
3. That the proposed CIAs, as part of the Statement of Licensing Policy, will take effect from 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 for three years unless, within that time, they are reviewed and the Council is of the opinion that they are no longer necessary.

### **9.2 Report of the Audit Committee, Appointment of External Auditors for 2023-2024 (plus 5 years)**

The Council considered the report of the Audit Committee regarding the appointment of External Auditors.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. Note the Appointment of External Auditors for 2023-24 (plus 5 years) report.
2. Agree to opt into the national scheme operated by the Public Sector Audit Appointments for external auditor appointments.

### 9.3 Report of the Standards Advisory Committee: Update on the new Member Code of Conduct

The Council considered the report of the Standard Advisory Committee regarding the adoption of the new Member Code of Conduct.

#### RESOLVED:

1. Note the Update report on the new Member Code of Conduct and appendix.
2. Agree to adopt the new Member Code of Conduct and add it to the Council's Constitution.
3. Agree that the new Code be adopted from Friday 6 May 2022 with training to be included as part of the Member Induction Programme following the local elections.

## 10. OTHER BUSINESS

### 10.1 Proposed changes to Borough Ward names

The Council considered the report of the General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Helal Uddin **moved** a proposal to agree name changes for Bethnal Green and St Peter's Wards but not to change the name of the Canary Wharf Ward.

The recommendations were put to a vote and were **agreed**.

#### RESOLVED:

1. Note the results of the consultation on proposed changes to Borough Ward Names
2. To amend the names of the Borough Wards as follows:
  - change Bethnal Green Ward to Bethnal Green East Ward
  - change St. Peter's Ward to Bethnal Green West Ward
3. To not change the name of the Canary Wharf Ward.

Councillors Kabir Ahmed, Peter Golds, Harun Miah and Andrew Wood voted against the recommendations. (The Councillors requested that their vote be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.7)

**10.2 Spitalfields Neighbourhood Plan – Post-Referendum Report**

Report withdrawn from the agenda.

**11. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

The following questions and in each case supplementary questions were put (except where indicated) and were responded to by the Mayor or relevant Executive Member:

**11.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds:**

Will the Mayor state how many CCTV cameras there are provided and managed by the council in the borough?

**Response of Mayor John Biggs:**

The Council has over 1140 cameras in various locations in the Borough broken down into the following areas:

- Coverage for 13 blocks managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.
- 685 covering Council own buildings.
- Approximately 80 cameras covering parks and green spaces.
- 362 cameras on the street covering public areas

The Council will be replacing CCTV cameras, through the use of £3.1million - This was with the aim of upgrading the network. The previous comments made by the Conservatives about the low number of cameras in the Borough were factually incorrect.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Peter Golds:**

I note from a Freedom of Information Enquiry that the Borough has 362 cameras, with very few on the Isle of Dogs. This compares poorly with Hackney with 2044, Newham 1336, Greenwich 723, and Southwark with 501. Why are we so deficient in CCTV cameras - given the issues, for example, with knife crime as discussed in the earlier motion?

**Mayor John Biggs response to supplementary question:**

The 362 referred to relates to on-street cameras covering public areas. However, this is added to by the above mentioned cameras and also the extensive network of cameras operating in the Borough, including, for example the Canary Wharf Estate network and the TFL network as well as many other places where there was monitoring of public spaces. We note the massive public concern about public safety. However, we need to take a balanced approach to this. It is possible that different places had answered your questions differently.

**11.3 Question from Councillor Shah Ameen:**

I am thrilled to hear about the £9.3 million Levelling-Up funding that the Council secured in my ward, Whitechapel. Please can the Lead Member tell me how this money will be used to regenerate the area?

**Response of Mayor John Biggs:**

I am delighted that this bid had been successful particularly as we were initially categorised as being in band 3. It is an exciting time for the area with the arrival of Crossrail and the new Town Hall as well as the other plans for the area. The priority was to make the environment and the area safer and more pleasant. But also to ensure that the regeneration benefits communities living in the area as well. I am very pleased for Whitechapel, Spitalfields and St Peters, and Bethnal Green wards who will all benefit from this, and possible also Stepney Green.

No supplementary questions was asked.

**11.4 Question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed:**

The Council is required to publish its accounts by 31st May each year and formally approve and audit the accounts by 31st July, but due to the COVID pandemic it has been extended to 30th September. Can the Mayor confirm that in line with the accounts and audit regulations 2015 and also the amendment for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 that Tower Hamlets council's accounts for the last tax year 2020/2021 have been published, audited and certified?

**Response of Councillor Candida Ronald, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector:**

The Council was required to either publish its 20/21 audited accounts by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 or if this has not been possible, publish a statement on the website explaining why. The Council has done this. The main reasons why the 20/21 accounts and audit have not been completed is that the audits from prior years by Deloitte for 2018/19 and 19/20 are still ongoing and have not yet been completed. Finance staff at the Council have been dedicated to supporting these audits of prior years. The Auditors were working towards providing their final reports for 2018/19 and 19/20 to the Audit Committee in January 2022. The draft accounts for 2021 will be provided to the auditors by the end of the calendar year. Deloitte have provisionally booked in their audit resource to review the 2021 accounts, in January to March 2022. Once their audit is completed, they will present their final report to the Audit Committee and the audited accounts will be published once the Audit Committee have approved the audited statements.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Kabir Ahmed:**

It is clear that the accounts have not been submitted on time. In relation to the accounts and audit regulations, can the Mayor confirm if the tax records for

2016/17 and 17/18 have been certified by KPMG and the accounts for 2018/19, 19/20 have been audited and certified?

**Councillor Candida Ronald's response to supplementary question:**

I can confirm that the accounts for 2016/17 and 17/18 are with KPMG and the 2018/19 and 19/20 accounts are with Deloitte.

**11.5 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze:**

How much is the Council spending on projects related to the Mayor's Covid-19 Recovery Fund?

**Response of Mayor John Biggs:**

The Fund is a large scheme aimed at kicked starting the economic, health and social recovery from Covid - 19. Nearly £3m of grants have been committed. We are using the fund to support 25 projects in four key areas, around the following:

- Community lead recovery.
- Healthy recovery.
- Community recognised and celebrated and
- Supporting children and young people to recover

Amongst the 25 projects the fund will support was the Volunteer Centre, which has been awarded £75k for voluntary work. With over 300,000 volunteers, it's work has been crucial in supporting many schemes across the Borough, during the pandemic, to help vulnerable residents. It's a good scheme, but we need to monitor it's performance.

No supplementary question was asked.

**11.6 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood:**

Will the Mayor provide an update on the discussions with utility providers and the GLA as to the capacity of the utility networks (gas, water, sewage, electricity) specifically to and underneath Marsh Wall to support the developments approved by LBTH along Marsh Wall or close to it?

**Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning:**

The Council were working closely with all utility partners including Thames Water as well as developers and the Greater London Authority regarding utility needs.

All utility companies have been regularly updated with development projections. This summer, the Council has also provided utility companies with a focus analysis of development phasing along Marsh Wall and the wider Isle of Dogs, to assist with their planning.

The Council has also worked in partnership with the GLA to develop on line GIS mapping system, to assist utility companies with planning interventions effectively as well as ongoing longer term planning work.

We note that the utility space along Marsh Wall is nearing capacity and this has created challenges. Therefore, we have been working closely with Thames Water on the delivery of a plan to provide water from the north and the south of the Borough. We have also been working with suppliers to consider options for enhancing capacity for electricity provision along Marsh Wall.

The Council is supporting exercises to identify, develop and deliver appropriate solutions.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Andrew Wood:**

The Mayor of London's Opportunity Area Planning Framework, for the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar published in September 2019, highlights a number of these issues and the measures that needs to be taken. For example, it notes the need for two additional primary substations on the Isle of Dogs.

There is also a Development Infrastructure Funding Study commissioned by the GLA.

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the delivery of the Development Infrastructure Funding Study? It appears that very little progress has been made with this.

**Councillor Asma Islam's response to supplementary question:**

I will need to come back to you about that.

**11.7 Question from Councillor Faroque Ahmed**

How will the Council implement the recommendations put forward by the Poverty Review?

**Response of Councillor Mufedah Bustin Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion:**

A detailed action plan is under preparation and a series of discussions were underway with difference voluntary, community and public sector partners to discuss the findings and to make recommendations, including how to take these forward.

In a number of areas, work has begun to implement the recommendations of the review. For example, work is underway to roll out an early financial intervention and the use of the benefits and budgeting calculator, across children's services. The finding from the review will be used to inform the

initial design of our front line transformation programme. A Cabinet report on progress will be submitted in Autumn 2022.

No supplementary question was asked.

**11.8 Question from Councillor Harun Miah:**

The road marking in Watney street and Cable Street junction is increasingly causing a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Can the cabinet member urgently look into this and install a give way sign to cyclist to minimise harm?

**Response of Councillor Kahar Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm:**

I presume that officers have been in touch with you to seek further clarity about the specific location of the proposed give way sign and the hazards you are referring to.

I wish to also point out that the road layout was safety audited at the design phase. No additional give way signs were deemed necessary.

Nevertheless, officers will arrange for this to be looked into again and discuss this directly with you.

No supplementary question was asked:

**11.9 Question from Councillor Val Whitehead:**

Recent polling shows 80% of Britons across all regions and ethnicities feel anxious about climate breakdown. We know that in order to avert a catastrophe we will need macro and micro change.

What is the Council doing to empower its residents to make a difference?

**Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning:**

The Council has committed to becoming a net zero carbon Borough by 2045.

We are carrying out a number of steps to empower residents. Recent activities include:

- Providing information to residents and awareness raising.
- Interventions to connect all partners to coordinate their actions. For example, by arranging climate engagement events, establishing the Climate Task Force.
- Launching a Net Zero Carbon Partnership Action Plan. A key element of the action plan is to engage and empower residents, and enable a just transition to net zero

The plan will establish a climate alliance in collaboration with residents.

The plan will seek to deliver a number of measures including:

- To collect data on emissions and track progress.
- Identify the impact of climate change on communities.
- To provide guidance to empower residents to take action and adopt more substantiable practices. For example, energy efficiency tips.
- To share good practice.
- To encourage residents to co – design solutions.
- Create green jobs for local people.
- Invest in a greener and healthier Borough.
- Provide access to nature and biodiversity.
- To tackle food poverty.
- To deliver waste, recycling and green travel interventions.

No supplementary question was asked.

**11.10 Question from Councillor Marc Francis:**

Will the Lead member for Housing state when Tower Hamlets Homes will begin consulting residents on introducing a new Traffic Management Order to enable parking enforcement for the St Stephen's estate, Usher Road and Annie Besant close

**Response of Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing:**

I can confirm that our plans for St Stephen's estate, Usher Road and Annie Besant close will be drawn up before Christmas and we plan to start the resident consultation in either late February or early March 2022.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Marc Francis:**

Will you look at the possibility of making unlet bays (to residents of Tower Hamlets Homes or the Borough) available to local business, as they were under the old system ended by the Government. This would help local businesses retained longstanding and valued members of staff, during this difficult period. Especially those that had rented a bay for many years. This could be done by simply adding an extra tier to the cascade system that was agreed by the Mayor in Cabinet in 2018.

**Councillor Danny Hassell's response to supplementary question:**

I am very happy to look at this with Tower Hamlets Homes, if you think there is resident support for such a proposal. I am also happy to discuss this with you further ahead of the resident consultation

**11.11 Question from Councillor Amina Ali:**

The £20 cut to Universal Credit has caused severe hardship to many vulnerable people in Tower Hamlets, and the Government's response to this issue in the Spending Review has not even touched the surface of this problem.

What is the Council doing to support families affected by this cut?

**Response of Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion:**

The cuts to Universal Credit, and as well the end of the job retention scheme, increased fuel prices and costs of living, are all currently having an impact on residents finances.

In addition to the support already provided to residents, (through for example the Resident Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Mayor's free school meals), the Council will support residents facing financing hardship in a number of ways over the winter including through:

- Making plans to ensure the Government's Household Support Fund reaches the greatest number of residents – with targeted outreach to those less likely to apply.
- Launching a number of targeted campaigns to ensure our most vulnerable residents are aware of the support available, focusing on Pension Credit and the Attendance Allowance, Healthy Start Vouchers, the Warm Home Discount, WaterSure and WaterHelp.
- Providing an additional £100,000 through the Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund to advice agencies to support residents. The fund has also supported food pantries, small grants to community organisations, and the volunteer hub.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Amina Ali:**

Can you provide more details on the Communication Strategy to raise awareness of how residents can get support and access Council support?

**Councillor Mufeedah Bustin's response to supplementary question:**

We are mindful of the need to make sure residents are aware of the support available, and they go to the right place for help. Therefore, we will be undertaking a Comms campaign to ensure this, with a specific focus on key dates to highlight particular issues over the winter.

We will also be making use of the data we have to carry out targeted campaigns.

**11.12 Question from Councillor Helal Uddin:**

Can the Mayor provide us with an update on the Parks investment programme?

**Response of Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Sports:**

I am very proud to confirm that we have a £10million Parks Investment Programme, which will improve over 60 of the Borough's parks and open spaces. Since its establishment in 2018, for a period of five years, it has secured the delivery of a substantial programme of improvement and development for the benefit of all our residents.

It falls into six main programmes areas:

- Inclusive Play – valued at over £2million.
- Improvements to sports facilities and parks.
- Biodiversity.
- Community gardens.
- Mitigating Anti – Social Behaviour valued at £500,000.
- Signage, Interpretation and Heritage.
- Quality parks.

In addition, the infrastructure programme has added a further 26 projects to support the provision of quality parks, inclusive play and sports parks.

No supplementary question was asked:

**11.13 Question from Councillor Puru Miah:**

In light of the Public Sector Equalities Duty, how many schools in Tower Hamlets have an up-to-date Equality Information and Objectives Policy, especially in the light of recent finding in regard to the disproportionate number of Covid deaths in certain demographics? And how many schools have adopted the model policy advocated by the Runnymede Trust?

**Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities:**

School's policies are the responsibility of the Governing bodies and the Council does not hold information about their policies. So this question would need to be addressed to school's individually. For those schools that have a Service Level Agreement for Governance, they are regularly reminded of their duty to have an up to date Equality Information and Objectives Policy. This should be available on their website and audits are also carried out within those schools.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Puru Miah:**

I think it is the duty of the Council to monitor that and take a lead in that. Is the Lead Member aware of moves in Swanlea School to remove a governing body with protected characteristics to make way for academisation, aided by Council Officers, which is against Council policy against academisation passed in this Chamber?

**Councillor Asma Begum's response to supplementary question:**

I have not been signed on this particular issue so I will need to take this up with you outside of the meeting.

Question 11.1 was not put due to the absence of the questioner. Questions 11.14 - 11.16 were not put due to lack of time. A written response would be provided to these questions. (Note the written responses are included in Appendix A to these minutes)

**12. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

(No Motions were considered due to lack of time).

The meeting ended at 10.15 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

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### Responses to Questions not put at the Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021

#### 11.1 Question from Councillor Eve McQuillan

Will the Mayor provide an update on the Liveable Streets programme given his recent announcement?

#### Response from Mayor John Biggs

Thank you for your question about Liveable Streets.

Last month we announced the next steps on Liveable Streets following a short review of the seven schemes currently underway. We paused the scheme over the summer to consider a number of issues and concerns that had been raised by some residents and businesses.

Following this review there will be some changes to make road access easier where a problem of access was identified, and these will be subject where necessary to consultation. Once completed, as the schemes bed in, we will monitor and review their operation.

We've always been committed to the benefits of safer, calmer and cleaner streets, but it's important to consider the issues that some residents and businesses have raised. We've taken those concerns on board and are adapting the schemes in a few places as required.

Our review was about finding the right balance for our community to deliver the cleaner air and safer streets that our residents deserve, while making a small number of changes to address problems that had been identified.

#### 11.6 Supplementary Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the delivery of the Development Infrastructure Funding Study?

#### Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

The Development Infrastructure Funding Study (DIFS) that supported the GLA's Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework (IODSP OAPF) was influenced by and has influenced the council's internal Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which supports the Local Plan. The two documents are intended to be broadly in accord with each other, whilst allowing for the fact that they cover different geographical ranges and timescales (DIFS is up to 2041, whereas the IDP is up to 2031).

The IDP is used to support the council's approach and governance of infrastructure projects approval and delivery, and therefore the DIFS is reflected in these processes for all projects up to 2031. The DIFS study is available to view on the GLA's website alongside the OAPF.

TfL is reviewing their investment programme which is very much impacted by the pandemic. LBTH and GLA are monitoring delivery of OAPF with the first full review point in 2024. Changes in the TfL plans may trigger this review and potential update to DIFS earlier.

#### **11.14 Question from Councillor David Edgar**

The interim report of the Competition and Markets Authority reports that private providers of children's homes are making 'significant and persistent' profits by charging councils elevated prices for placements with the largest providers charging councils an average of £3,830 a week per child with an average operating profit margin of 23%.

What is the response of the council to this report and is it considering with other councils the option of providing children's home directly?

#### **Response of Councillor Asma Begum, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services, Education and Equalities**

Tower Hamlets welcomes the findings of this report as it echoes the experience we have had to find appropriate and value for money residential placements for some of our most complex and highest need children.

Tower Hamlets is one of nine other boroughs working in partnership on developing a residential framework to provide children's homes across North East London with the aim of improved and value for money residential accommodation that provide children with a better care experience.

The framework has been in operation since 2020 and care experienced children were consulted in the development of the project to ensure that the right environment is created for children moving into the homes. The goal is offer up to 35 placements across the 9 authorities by the end of 2022, and there are currently three children's homes up and running with nine placements from the consortium.

This initiative is a first step in a wider pan-London strategy by all London local authorities to regain more control of the market.

#### **11.15 Question from Councillor Bex White**

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Local Infrastructure Fund consultation with residents for the coming year?

#### **Response of Councillor Asma Islam, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning:**

On Monday 8th November 2021, the 6 week public consultation for LIF (Local Infrastructure Fund) Programme 4 began. The income collected is estimated to be around £2.5million.

Much like last year's consultation, local people are invited to suggest project ideas for local infrastructure improvements within their neighbourhoods. This is a 'call for

projects' approach again, with more detailed engagement on projects and priorities to be undertaken by the end of summer next year.

The consultation will include an online questionnaire, online map survey tool, virtual drop-in events, and targeted engagement via community groups. This process accords with our regulatory duty to engage and agree with local people on how we should spend LIF funding.

Further information was provided at the two councillor sessions earlier this month, including discussion on long-term member involvement in the LIF programme and the outline of the LIF consultation.

Additionally, more information can be found on the council's website dedicated to the consultation at <https://talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lif>.

#### **11.16 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan**

Following my visit with the Director for Environment to Watney Market in Shadwell raising concerns of disrepair to the Market, traders and businesses to have better improved premises, storage and stalls to operate from improve, cleaner and sanitised areas both in the underground parking and in the market square and improved lighting, will the Mayor commit to ensuring that Watney Market is improved by addressing the issues identified from the visit.

#### **Response from Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Work, Economic Growth and Faith**

The many problems identified at Watney Market are all interrelated, and I'm sure you would agree that it is important to adopt a holistic approach to repairs and future maintenance to prevent issues recurring.

Officers from the Council and Tower Hamlets Homes are currently preparing a substantial capital bid for 22/23 to address the issues identified, and are in the process of agreeing a service level agreement whereby Tower Hamlets Council can assume responsibility of maintenance for the whole area, with other landowners (THH and One Housing Group), contributing to costs as appropriate and proportionate.

I hope you find this response useful, and I am happy to discuss it with you further.

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